

MAGNOLIA MACROPHYLLA MICHAUX NATURALIZED IN MARYLAND

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Magnolia macrophylla Michaux, a widespread but rather rare and local tree, has been reported from southern Ohio and the mountains of Virginia, southward to Georgia, and west to Louisiana and Arkansas (Hardin 1972). This small tree occurs individually or in groves along streams or rich valleys and is noted for its remarkable leaf and flower size. The big-leaf magnolia produces the largest simple leaves - nearly 1 m. in length - of any tree found in temperate North America. Its cream-colored flowers, which are 32 - 46 cm. across, are the largest of the genus.

This species is grown occasionally as an ornamental in the eastern states and is hardy as far north as Massachusetts (Sargent 1949). Locally abundant in Baltimore County, Maryland, the species is here reported as an escape from cultivation. Birds probably dispersed seeds from residential yard plantings near the Patapsco River Valley State Park. This region of the piedmont plateau with its sheltered stream valleys and slightly acid silt loams, simulates its Southern Appalachian habitat well.

Collection data - BALTIMORE CO.: Mixed deciduous woods near meandering stream, Shelbourne and Sulphur Springs Rds., adjacent to the University of Maryland Baltimore County, 4/24/80, Riefner & Tremper 8026; alluvial bottomlands SE 1 mi. from Hilltop Rd., Patapsco River Valley State Park, 5/15/80, Riefner & Tremper 8056; rich woods S from Newburg Rd., 5/22/80, Riefner 8063; rich woods along Hilton Rd. near Patapsco River Valley State Park maintenance complex, 5/22/80, Riefner 8066.

The discovery of M. macrophylla in northeastern Maryland represents a range extension of several hundred miles from its previously known station in Virginia, and these new localities now form the northeasternmost range limit of the species outside of cultivation. Voucher specimens have been placed in the Towson State University Herbarium (BALT) and the Herbarium of the University of Maryland at College Park (M).

LITERATURE CITED

- HARDIN, J.W. 1972. Studies of the southeastern United States flora III. Magnoliaceae and Illiciceae. Elisha Mitchell Sci. Soc. 88: 30-32.
- SARGENT, CHARLES S. 1949. Manual of the trees of North America. New York: Dover Publications.

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